



DALIT WOMEN AND WRITING IN POST INDEPENDENCE INDIA-

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In the deep roots of Dalit writing, when we examine Dalit literature, we get the clues that prove that after India's freedom Dalit writing has got prominent place. It has raised question on Dalit's and Dalit women conditions with their suppression by the rest male dominated society. But through this paper, my focus is on the significant role of 'Dalit women in writing in post-independence India'. It is praiseworthy that, with the inspiration of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Dalit women came forth in the field of writing and with their rhetorical voice, socked the whole world.

Dalit literature is a post-independence literary phenomenon which has now become a critical concept in writing. Though the concept Dalit's has taken its roots from the Vedic period where the society was divided in various caste such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya & Shudra according to their karma and working professions. The lower i.e. Shudra did lower professions and were oppressed by the other high caste. They were later called Dalit.

The term Dalit is synonymous to the Marathi word 'Dalan' which means crushed. **Lai A.C** remarks in a conference at Nagpur "The word Dalit is a beautiful word because it embraces the sufferings, frustrations, expectations & groaning of the entire cosmos"¹

After India's independence 1947 Dalit literature raised & in 1960's, second decade after freedom Dalit writers started to write about their agony of suppression through their bitter experiences. Women played significance role by writing autobiography, poetry, short stories. Fictions etc. **Literature by Dalit women is an attempt to articulate unheard, unspoken voices"**². The main issue of Dalit women writing was their harassment through gender, cast & class. The women writers wrote what they felt in male dominated society physically & mentally.

Firstly, Dalit women started to write in their regional languages such as Telugu, Tamil etc. & later their works were translated in English by prominent translators. **Some prominent Telugu women writers are-CHALLAPALLI SWAROOPA RANI, JOOPAKA SUBHADRA, JAJULA GOWRI, SWATHY MARGARAT & GOGU SHYAMALA”3**

These women writers wrote in all forms of literature. Their autobiographies also played a helpful role in show the oppression of Dalit women both in home & outside, & also with this dissimilarity between a woman of upper class and woman of lower class. **Some world known autobiographies like -Baby Kamble “the prisons we broke” {2008}”, P.Shivakami ‘Grip Of Change’ (4) Bama ‘Karukku’ Urmila Pawar ‘The Weave Of My Life’ etc. show the protest of women against the rest society including patriarchal system.**

Really it was very crucial for dalit women to live under such a system where they were being exploited because of their gender and lack of education. They were being low wages though they were working equal to males. **Bama in her book karukku expresses her sorrow as a Dalit-Are Dalit not human beings? Do they not have commonsense? Do they not have such attributes, as a sense of honor, and self -respect? Are they without any wisdom, beauty, dignity?(karukku p.27)5**

Before the independence of India, during first four decades of 20th century, Dalit women were not much educated to write about their irony of life. They were not given opportunities to develop their personality. They were considered the kathputli of male’s hands. But in post-independence India, few Dalit women activists started to write about Dalits and Dalit women, inspired by Babasaheb Ambedkar.

During 21st century Dalit women writing got much popularity and prominent place in English literature. **In present, a few women activists like- Ruth Manorama are working on legal and political field to the empowerment of Dalit women.6**

1980s and in 1990s decades look like a milestone in the field of Dalit women writing. Several female writers came forth & penned every note on Dalit women & their sufferings due to caste & gender. Vijile Chirrapad (home without a kitchen, 2006) Gogo Shamala (Father may be an Elephant & Mother only a small basket, 2012) Shanta Bai Kamble (The kaleidoscopic story of my life 1983), Urmila Pawar’s (weave of my life 1983) Babytai Kamble (Prison we broke 1987) Kumud Pawade (thoughtful outburst 1981) are some works that put the real picture of Dalit women exploitations by upper or middle class women. These books also helpful in showing the marginalized position of Dalit women and also empower the Dalit women fundamental rights against violence.

Beside women writers, women activists such as Kumud Pawde, founding member of National Federation of Dalit women (NFDW) , Kiruba Munusamy, Supreme Court Lawyer, Meena Kandasamy, a great Novelist & Poetess Sujata Gidla , Yashica Dutt etc. are giving their attribution to reforming Dalit Women & also awaking Dalit women by Campaigns to educate oppressed communities about Human Rights against injustice and Domestic Violence.

To conclude it can be examined that in post- independence India, Dalit women has proved themselves superior through their writing. They also got prominent place in writing through their essays, poetry, novels, short stories and autobiographies. Now a days, their writing has become a medium of women empowerment in this caste divided and male dominated society. It is also well known that though they suffered a lot of harassment and atrocities, yet they have faced all, with an optimistic way of writing protest this caste dependent society. Really what happened with Dalit women is a cause of question mark, but I hope and my best wishes for Dalit women writing and their contribution for writing and giving us such an opportunity to write about them.

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